

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /101 W
-----113446 040554Z /20

R 031710Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7385
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USNMR SHAPE BEL
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NICOSIA 0595

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC
USCINCEUR FOR POLAD
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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, ELAB, CY
SUBJECT: CURRENT LABOR DISPUTES IN NORTHERN CYPRUS

BEGIN SUMMARY: MOUNTING TURKISH CYPRIOT LABOR DISPUTES
RESULT AS MUCH FROM POLITICAL AS ECONOMIC CAUSES.
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DIFFICULTIES LIKELY TO CONTINUE, BUT ADMINISTRATION AND
OPPOSITION SEEM TO HAVE BACKED DOWN FROM TOTAL IMPASSE.
END SUMMARY.

1. TURKISH CYPRIOT LABOR DISPUTES, WHICH HAVE
INCREASED IN NUMBER AND VOLUBILITY OVER LAST FEW
MONTHS, APPEAR TO HAVE PEAKED IN RECENT DAYS. AMONG

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN:

A. TOTAL DISRUPTION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR OVER A MONTH AS THE TWO TEACHERS' UNIONS STRUCK FOR HIGHER PAY AND COST OF LIVING INCREASES. STRIKE ENDED WITH TEACHERS' DEMANDS ESSENTIALLY UNFULFILLED AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT OPPOSED TO STRIKE.

B. POSSIBILITY OF A GOVERNMENT-WIDE STRIKE BY TURKISH CYPRIOT CIVIL SERVANTS UNION. A ONE-DAY WARNING STRIKE WAS HELD JANUARY 18. A 56-DAY STRIKE BY A LOCAL OF THE CIVIL SERVANTS' UNION AT THE STATE PRINTING OFFICE ENDED FEB 21. THE ADMINISTRATION PLEDGED TO SUBMIT NEW LEGISLATION REGULATING PRINTERS' STATUS NO LATER THAN MARCH 25. STRIKE BY POSTAL WORKERS IS NOW IN 58TH DAY WITH NO MAIL DELIVERY DURING THIS PERIOD. POSTAL WORKERS ARE DEMANDING AN IMMEDIATE 20 PERCENT PAY RAISE.

2. DECLARED REASON FOR MOST RECENT WAVE OF DISRUPTIONS HAS BEEN THE TEACHERS' AND CIVIL SERVANTS' OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT'S NEW CIVIL SERVICE AND PERSONNEL LEGISLATION UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE ASSEMBLY. AMONG THE VARIOUS OBJECTIONS RAISED HAVE BEEN THAT LEGISLATION FAILS TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT RETROACTIVE BENEFITS, THAT NEW SALARY SCHEDULES DO NOT REFLECT A REALISTIC PARITY BETWEEN CYPRUS POUND AND TURKISH LIRA, THAT TEACHERS' CONFIDENTIAL

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AUTONOMOUS STATUS UNDER PREVIOUS LEGISLATION WOULD BE INFRINGED AND THAT RIGHT TO STRIKE WOULD BE CURTAILED. LABOR DEMANDS THAT BILL BE WITHDRAWN WHERE TURNED DOWN BY ADMINISTRATION, BUT KONUK GOVERNMENT PROMISED TO RECONSIDER "OBJECTIONABLE" PORTIONS OF BILL. OPPOSITION PRESS HAS ALSO POINTED OUT THE MUNIFICENCE OF THE PROPOSED SALARY INCREASES FOR PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET COMPARED TO CIVIL SERVICE AT LARGE.

3. OTHER MORE IMPORTANT FACTORS ARE ALSO BEHIND THE CURRENT WAVE OF ACTIVITY. AMONG THEM WE NOTE:

A. COMPETITION BETWEEN (ICFTU-AFFILIATED) TURK-SEN AND THE TWO OTHER SYNDICATES: DEV-IS (REVOLUTIONARY/ REFORMIST) AND ISEC (ILERICI SENDIKALAR/FEDERSSYONU). THE LATTER IS APPARENTLY A PAPER ORGANIZATION UNITING THE TWO TEACHERS' UNIONS AND THE CIVIL SERVANTS INTO A SINGLE UNIT. ALTHOUGH THE CONSTITUENT UNIONS ACT IN CONCERT, THEY HAVE DONE SO UNDER THEIR OWN NAMES RATHER THAN THAT OF THE LARGER UNIT. THE RIVALRY BETWEEN TURK-SEN AND DEV-IS FOR EXCLUSIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR LABOR DISPUTES AND

STOPPAGES AT TURKISH CYPRIOT SANAYI (INDUSTRIAL)
HOLDING COMPANY AND MORE RECENTLY AT THE ELECTRIC
AUTHORITY AND STATE PRINTING OFFICE.

B. UNIONS PRESENTLY INVOLVED IN DISPUTES HAVE CLOSE
RELATIONS WITH THE OPPOSITION PARTIES, PAHTICULARLY
THE COMMUNAL LIBERATION AND REPUBLICAN TURKISH PARTIES.
OPPOSITION HAS LITTLE CHANCE OF AFFECTING LEGISLATION
IN THE ASSEMBLY EXCEPT BY MOBILIZING ITS EXTRA-
PARLIAMENTARY RESOURCES. LABOR AGITATION ALSO FITS
IN WITH OPPOSITION'S LONGER-RUN STRATEGY TO DEPICT THE
ADMINISTRATION AS INCAPABLE OF DEALING WITH COMMUNITY'S
PROBLEMS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NICOSIA 0595

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C. TURKISH CYPRIOTS HAVE LIVED IN AN UNSETTLED
CONDITION FOR MANY YEARS. TURKISH INTERVENTION IN
1974 DID NOT RESOLVE ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES, BUT
RATHER CREATED AN UNRECOGNIZED MINI-STATE WHICH NOW HAS
TO COPE WITH PLETHORA OF PROBLEMS WHICH WERE IGNORED
OR POSTPONED DURING STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL. PRECARIOUS
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ECONOMIC STRENGTH OF THE STATE COMPOUNDS DIFFICULTY IN DOING
SO.

4. COMMENT: TFSC ADMINISTRATION IN PAST HAS GENERALLY
TAKEN A COMPROMISING APPROACH TO LABOR DIFFICULTIES,
IN A KIND OF "FLY NOW, PAY LATER" TACTIC TO RETAIN
SUPPORT OF ORGANIZED LABOR. HOWEVER IN MOST RECENT ROUND,
TFSC AUTHORITIES HAVE TAKEN FIRMER APPRTACH, PERHAPS
BECAUSE OF CHAOS WITHIN LABOR MOVEMENT, TURK-SEN'S
FORMAL DISAFFILIATION FROM GOVERNING NATIONAL UNITY
PARTY AND APPARENT POLITICAL MOTIVATION OF STRIKES.
NEVERTHELESS, ADMINISTRATION'S PRINCIPAL TACTIC
REMAINS INITIAL JAWBONING, THEN PROCESS OF
COMPROMISE AND ACCOMMODATION. IF, AS IN THE PAST,
EITHER LABOR OR GOVERNMENT FAILS TO HONOR ITS PLEDGES,
OLD DISPUTES WILL EMERGE AGAIN, PROBABLY AS INEVITABLE NEW
LABOR TROUBLES SURFACE, AND THUS UNITE TO CREATE EVER
MORE NETTLESOME PROBLEMS FOR TFSC ADMINISTRATION.
HOWEVER, PRESENT TEMPER, BY GOVERNMENT AND LABOR ALIKE,
IS TO AVOID ULTIMATE SHOWDOWN. EMBASSY PREDICTION IS
THAT LABOR DISPUTES WILL CONTINUE WITH CONCURRENT
THREATS BY LABOR OF IMMINENT GENERAL STRIKES. NEXT
"CRISIS" POINT WILL OCCUR WHEN REVISED CIVIL SERVICE
AND PERSONNEL ACT EMERGES FROM TFSC ASSEMBLY. END
COMMENT.
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